

Grantee: St. Joseph Shelter

Grant Amount: \$300,000

Location: Mt. Angel, OR

Migrant farmworkers in Oregon face great difficulty in obtaining housing. They earn very low wages, rely on temporary housing, and prefer to be near the farms they work. These variables complicate housing selection so that almost no place meets the migrant farmworker families housing needs. However, St. Joseph Shelter has been coming to the aid of migrant and area farmworkers in rural Oregon for the past 25 years. St. Joseph Shelter continuously provides migrant housing and other related services to this population in addition to operating the Family Shelter Program, which provides emergency shelter for up to 11 homeless families.

St. Joseph Shelter's goal is to help homeless, migrant farmworker families by providing safe and decent housing in a community that is surrounded by agriculture. Up until May 2013, migrant farmworkers housed through St. Joseph Shelter were divided between two buildings, Bernard and Bede Halls. These buildings were originally built in 1968 as dormitories for students at Mt. Angel College. Due to the small, dormitory-style design of Bernard and Bede Hall, St. Joseph Shelter was unable to provide shelter to migrant farmworker families. Annually, they had to turn away 20 families seeking assistance. These families had few options and either moved into over-crowded or unsuitable conditions (in their car or out in the open).

In order to accommodate the migrant, farmworker families, Bede Hall was redesigned into Casa Adele with 10 individual apartment style units. Utilizing their \$300,000 Rural Innovation Fund (RIF) grant, in combination with more than \$1.7 million in leverage funding, St. Joseph Shelter was able to partner with CASA of Oregon, a private non-profit that specializes in the development of farmworker housing. CASA provided technical assistance throughout the planning, development and pre-construction phases of this project. The interior of the building was demolished and changed from dormitory rooms to 10 self-contained units comprised of eight 2 bedroom apartments and two studios. In addition, each unit has its own full kitchen and full bathroom, a storage area, as well as access to a common area with a mudroom and laundry services. With the redesign, both single male migrant farmworkers (in Bernard Hall) and farmworker families are being served. Now families that were previously denied fair housing opportunities in the Marion County area have access to a place that vows to witness the dignity of each person by providing hot meals, housing, clothing, referrals, and other needed services.

Casa Adele will be financially sustainable. Income for Casa Adele comes from rents and use of the common washer and dryer. In addition, the Shelter will raise donations through its annual fundraising dinner, golf event, and community outreach. With the help of St. Joseph Shelter's staff, the Benedictine Sisters of Mt. Angel, and the community, they will continue to keep its doors open for farmworkers and their families. For more information about the continued success and opportunities provided by the St. Joseph Shelter and their partner CASA of Oregon, please visit their web sites: www.stjosephshelter.org or <http://www.casaoforegon.org/> or contact the shelter directly by calling (503)-845-6147.

